

Testimony of Christina Velez
Appropriations Sub-Committee Public Hearing February 22, 2012

Restore Funding to CT's Independent Living Centers

Currently, I am a psychology student at the University of Saint Joseph and have been fortunate enough to have an internship at the Independence Northwest Center in Naugatuck, Connecticut. From my experience at one of the five Independent Living Centers, I have learned that these facilities are essential to the disable and elder population and it is important to keep the Independent Living Centers properly funded.

Facilities like the Independent Living Center do not consider people with disabilities as cripples; rather, they see them as active citizens. The Independent Living Centers does not try to shelter people and does not allow them to feel inadequate; instead, they help their consumers to be members of the community and participate in activities such as: living on their own, getting a job, or shopping for themselves.

The Independent Living Center provides several aids to the disable and elder community which includes, but does not limit, providing information and referral, peer counseling, independent living skills, training, and advocacy to thousands of people. Also, the Independent Living Center has programs such as Money Follows the Person (MFP), Aging and Disability Resource Centers, Ticket to Work, and other programs that allow individuals to be independent and care for themselves more.

The Independent Living Centers are important for the disable and elder population. These centers allow people to know that they are capable of being independent and I personally believe that everyone deserves to be their own individual. Thus, it is imperative to keep funding all the Independent Living Centers so that they can to continue to strive in helping the elderly and disable population and for them to have a resource that they can seek aid and rely on. Without funding the Independent Living Center will not be able to help and both the elder and disable population will suffer.

Submitted by:

Christina Velez

Waterbury, CT